

Introduction

1. This document contains the procedures for electing the Labour Link National Committee and are based on the Affiliated Political Fund Rules. These procedures are designed to ensure that we meet the UNISON rulebook's aim:
"To seek to ensure that members, activists, representatives and staff are treated with dignity and respect at all times when participating in the union's democratic structures."

Appointing the returning officer and agreeing a timetable

2. At least three months before the election, the UNISON Labour Link National Committee will appoint an independent, qualified returning officer who will act as scrutineer under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. UNISON has entered into a three-year contract with Civica Election Services (CES) to carry out these duties.
3. The UNISON Labour Link National Committee will agree a timetable to include:
 - a. the period when nominations for elections must be received
 - b. the date when ballot papers will first be sent to members who are entitled to vote
 - c. the date by which members must return their filled-in ballot papers, and
 - d. the date the result of the election will be announced.

Timetable

4. The timetable for the election, as agreed with the returning officer, is set out in the election timetable (appendix A). The result of the election will be as set out in this timetable and the members elected will take office immediately following the announcement of the result. The term of office will run until the announcement of the results of the 2023 Labour Link National Committee.

Eligibility for candidates

5. To be eligible for nomination to the UNISON Labour Link National Committee, the candidate must:
 - a. have been a full member of UNISON
 - b. have been a member of Labour Link (Affiliated Political Fund)
 - c. have been an individual member of the Labour Partyfor at least three months before the beginning of the election period. Throughout the election process, the prospective candidate must remain the above, and continue to meet the requirements of the seat for which they are standing.
6. A member may only stand for the seat within their region.
7. A member is not treated as a prospective candidate until we have received a signed candidate form (appendix C), as confirmation that they wish and are eligible to stand in the election.
8. A member must be nominated by at least two branches with Labour Link Fund members, from within the regional group they are a member of, at a properly constituted meeting of Labour Link levy payers.
9. Branches may only nominate a candidate from within their region.
10. The Labour Link is committed to fair representation and proportionality at all levels of our democratic structure. Eight of 11 regional seats are reserved for women, on a rotating basis, as outlined in Appendix B. Fuller details of our commitment can be found in the Labour Link Operational Rules, Chapter 1.5.

Election procedures, candidate and nomination forms

11. On the date set out in the timetable, election procedures, candidate forms and nomination forms will be:
- sent out as an email bulletin to branches and activists
 - available to download from our website, and
 - available on request.
12. Any candidate applications and nominations for this election must be made on the authorised candidate form (appendix C) and nomination form (appendix E). Copies of these forms are attached.

Returning nomination forms

13. Nominations can be made by branches which fall within an appropriate region.
14. The nominating process:
- a. Voting to decide which candidates to nominate must take place during the nomination period, as set out in the timetable.
 - b. The nomination form (appendix E) must be completed, including the date of the meeting, the type of meeting and the meeting venue.
 - c. Within a branch, only the levy paying members of the Labour Link political fund can take part in the nominating process, including any voting which may be needed to decide which candidate to nominate.
 - d. Nominations will only be accepted if they are on the official nomination form (appendix E), and are signed by two authorised branch officers, who are both members of the Labour Link Fund. One of them must be the branch Labour Link Officer if the branch has such an elected officer holder. The names and RMS numbers of the branch secretary and chair must match the ones recorded on the RMS membership system.
 - e. If the nomination form has been signed by another branch officer, an explanation of the reasons why should be given on the form. If either of these branch seats is vacant, details of another branch officer – for example, a vice chairperson or assistant secretary – should be included, with an explanation of the need for a substitute.
 - f. Where only one of these posts is filled, the signature of another branch officer is needed – i.e. two signatures are required.
 - g. The branch must send their filled-in nomination form to us by the date set out in the timetable.
 - h. Nomination forms should be returned by email.

Processing nomination forms

15. Nomination forms must be received by the deadline. Then:

- a. An email will be sent to the nominating body to tell them that their nomination form has been received.
 - b. Nomination forms received which are incomplete or incorrect will wherever possible be referred back to the nominating body as soon as reasonably practicable with a copy to the candidate.
16. At the end of the nomination period, the returning officer will decide if nominations are valid.
17. Nominating bodies will receive an email or letter, no later than the date set out in the timetable, to inform if their nomination is invalid and stating the reasons for that decision.

Returning candidate forms

18. A member is not treated as a prospective candidate until their signed candidate form (appendix C), has been received as confirmation that they wish and are eligible to stand in the election.
19. If the candidate later wants to withdraw from the election, they must do so, in writing, by the date set out in the timetable.
20. Candidate forms should be returned by email.

Processing candidate forms

21. Only candidate forms received by the deadline set out in the timetable will be accepted.
- a. An email will be sent to the candidate to tell them their candidate form has been received.
 - b. Candidate forms received in the Member Liaison Unit which are incomplete or incorrect may be referred back to the prospective candidate.
 - c. The Member Liaison Unit will check that the candidate is eligible to stand for the seat they have been nominated for.
22. At the end of the nomination period, as laid out in the timetable, the returning officer will decide whether candidates are eligible to stand in this election. If the nominated candidate is not eligible to stand, the candidate will be told why they are not eligible.
23. Candidates will receive an email no later than the date set out in the timetable, to confirm whether or not they are eligible to stand in the election.

Appeals

24. If a candidate or nominating body wants to appeal against the returning officer's decision, they should do so in writing by the date set out in the timetable. They must give full details of the reasons for their appeal, and provide documents to support this.
25. Appeals should be sent to:
The Returning Officer, Civica Election Services, The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London, N8 0NW
Phone: 0208 365 8909 Email: unison@cesvotes.com

26. The returning officer will make a final decision on the candidate's eligibility by no later than the date set out in the timetable.

Election address

27. All eligible candidates may prepare an election address. This will be sent out with the ballot paper.
28. The election address should be no longer than 300 words in total. The 300-word limit does not include the list of nominating bodies, although the list will be sent out with the election address. Any words over the limit will not be included in the printed version of the election address.
29. Candidates for seats in Cymru/Wales may submit a bilingual version of their election address. The candidate may choose the primary language to which the 300 word limit will apply. The Welsh version must be provided by the candidate and must be an exact translation of the English text.
30. In line with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, the contents of the election address, including spelling and grammar, are the candidate's responsibility. Neither the returning officer nor any UNISON employee will be allowed to correct or change any election address, except as necessary where the election address is longer than the word limit.
31. Election addresses should not contain statements that:
- go against our aims and objectives (as set out in Rule B)
 - are discriminatory, racist, sexist or abusive or
 - include false accusations against members or union staff.
- Any election addresses that contain these kinds of statements will be treated as a disciplinary offence under Rule I.
32. UNISON will not be responsible for any civil or criminal liability arising from publishing, copying or distributing individual election addresses. This liability will rest with the individual candidate.
33. The election address should be emailed to us by no later than the deadline set out in the timetable to LL2021@unison.co.uk.
34. Election addresses can be submitted separately to the candidate form but must be submitted by no later than the deadline set out in the timetable.
35. An election address form (appendix D) is available for prospective candidates to use to send us their election address. Further copies of the form can be downloaded here: www.unison.org.uk/elections or requested from the Member Liaison Unit at the address at the end of this document.
36. An email will be sent to candidates to confirm whether their election address was received by the deadline set out in the timetable.

Notice of the election

37. A notice will be published on the UNISON website detailing how the ballot will be carried out, by the date set out in the timetable.

Entitlement to vote

38. All eligible members who are included on our membership system three months before the date we plan to send out ballot papers will be entitled to vote in the appropriate election. Members who are not on the membership system or not entitled to participate on the date set out in the timetable will not be entitled to vote.

Ballot papers and the method of voting

39. Ballot papers will be sent to the member's home address and online ballot codes will be emailed to the member's email address (or any other address they have given in writing) as shown on our membership system. Members will have the option to vote online or by post. The ballot papers will include a prepaid envelope for returning the ballot papers to the scrutineer, and unique security identifiers for returning the vote online.

Members who have not received ballot papers

40. Members who have not received a ballot paper by the date set out in the timetable should contact the UNISONdirect ballot helpline.

The number is 0800 0 857 857.

Textphone number is 0800 0 96 79 68.

Campaigning

41. UNISON recognises that campaigning, in whatever form, is a vital part of any election process. The following sections of this document include guidance for those branches and candidates who are involved in elections. The aim is to make sure that everyone is clearly aware of their responsibilities and the limits set to allow fair elections to take place.

Candidates seeking nominations

42. For the purposes of seeking nominations and later for campaigning during the election, eligible prospective candidates can ask the Member Liaison Unit for an electronic copy of the contact details for relevant nominating bodies. This will be provided free of charge and only become available from the date set out on the timetable. Data will not be issued until candidate eligibility checks have been completed.
43. These contact details may be used for the period of the campaign but must be destroyed immediately at the close of the ballot as set out in the timetable. Any unauthorised use of this data or failure to destroy this data may result in action being taken and may also breach data protection requirements.
44. These contact details will only be issued to eligible prospective candidates.
45. Nominating bodies must not allow candidates, or their supporters, to have access to any membership data. This means that branch or workplace registers of members, including phone lists, email lists, home addresses or any other contact details provided by or stored by UNISON or an employer must not be used for election purposes. Any unauthorised use may breach data protection requirements.

Campaign procedures for branches and candidates

LABOUR LINK NATIONAL COMMITTEE
2021–2023 Election Procedures

46. Branches must not allow candidates, or their supporters, to have access to our electoral roll. This means that branch or workplace registers of members cannot be used for election purposes. Membership data will only be used for officially sending out ballot papers. Any unauthorised use may breach the Data Protection Act.
47. Any nominating body that invites a candidate to speak at a meeting of the nominating body about their involvement in the election must also invite all the other candidates contesting the same seat(s). Candidates can appoint a representative to attend these meetings and speak on the candidate's behalf. It is the responsibility of the prospective candidate to advise the nominating body of the name of their designated representative.
48. Nominating meetings must adhere to the principles agreed by the NEC including following Government health advice and not disadvantage any prospective candidates.
49. Prospective candidates or their representatives must not visit nominating bodies or workplaces to 'canvass' (persuade people to vote for them) without the nominating bodies' permission and unless the same opportunity has been offered to all other prospective candidates contesting the same seat(s).
50. Branch funds can be used to hold meetings (provided for by these procedures), whether they are used to hire a suitable room, advertise the meeting or pay the travel expenses of candidates or their representatives.
51. To ensure that UNISON remains an independent and representative trade union where all members have the right to fully and fairly participate, no nominee or candidate shall invite or accept any donation or contribution in money or kind from any outside organisation or company, including from any provider of goods or services to UNISON, any political party, or any employer in which UNISON organises. For the avoidance of doubt, an 'outside organisation or company' includes but is not limited to, an organisation, club, association or other entity which consists wholly or partly of UNISON members and which is not provided for in UNISON rules. In determining whether or not something fits into this category, income, resources and formal structures would be considered. This is not an exhaustive list. Examples of donations of any 'kind' includes, but is not limited to, the production, design, printing and distribution of campaign materials, such as leaflets, posters, emails, social media postings, websites, SMS messaging and organising campaigning events. In determining whether or not something fits into this category, income, resources and formal structures would be considered. This is not an exhaustive list.
52. UNISON funds, property or resources (as set out in section 51 d) cannot be used to support campaigning for any particular candidate, except in the following circumstances.
 - a. If a nominating body wants to tell their members about the nomination(s) through their usual methods of communication (for example, branch newsletters, websites and social media resources). A 100 word statement per candidate may be produced, it should only explain why the nominating body has nominated the candidate, it should not take the form of asking members to vote for the candidate, nor should it include reference to any other nominations from other nominating bodies. It should only appear in the nominating body's usual methods of communication. A photograph of the candidate who has been nominated may be included. No links to social media may be included in these communications.
 - b. To hold meetings (as explained in this procedure).
 - c. To provide candidates with a copy of the contact details for all nominating bodies from the Member Liaison Unit (as explained in this procedure).

- d. UNISON funds, property or resources' include (but are not limited to):
- UNISON funds
 - UNISON facility time
 - Any resources as set out in the relevant employer's facilities agreement (including workplace email accounts).
 - The UNISON corporate identity or logo (or anything which in the opinion of the Returning Officer may be identified as such)
 - UNISON branch, regional or national secretarial, administrative and office facilities, including stationery, laptops and mobile phones
 - UNISON data, such as phone lists, email lists, home addresses or any other contact details provided by or stored by UNISON or as provided to UNISON by an employer
 - UNISON publications, UNISON websites and UNISON social media, including branch and self organised groups (SOGs)
 - The paid time of UNISON employees including branch employed staff expenses for travel and subsistence (food and drink), except for hustings.

Number of candidates

53. If the number of eligible candidates is no more than the number of seats for the group concerned, those candidates will be considered to have been elected. If two (or more) candidates for a seat receive an equal number of votes, a further election will be run for those candidates who 'tied'.

Voting system

54. The method of electing members will be by a simple majority of those voting in the election for each seat (or seats).

Complaints about elections

55. If you want to make a complaint about the fairness of the election, or how an election has been carried out, you must write to the returning officer (at the address below) by no later than the deadline set out in the election timetable. You should include any documents that support your complaint.
56. The returning officer will decide whether a complaint is valid.

Obligations on candidates

57. In the event that any candidate becomes aware of any breach or apparent breach of this procedure by another person or organisation acting or purporting to act on their behalf, the candidate shall as soon as reasonably practicable dissociate themselves from any breach, take all reasonable steps to prevent a recurrence of any breach, withdraw any material that has been issued in support of them and notify the Returning Officer they have done so. Obligations on members campaigning in elections
58. No UNISON member is permitted to distribute or share online any campaign materials relating to the NEC election produced by any outside organisations on behalf of a candidate in this election. If evidence is found that a member has distributed such materials produced by any outside organisation they may be subject to disciplinary action under the UNISON rule book.

The result of the election

59. The result of the election will be announced on the date set out in the timetable and published as soon as possible and notified to members through UNISON's normal methods of communication no later than three months after receiving it

Questions and contact information

60. If you would like any information or further explanation about these procedures or the election, you can contact us using the details below.

Member Liaison Unit
UNISON
The UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London
NW1 2AY

Phone: 0207 121 5399

E-mail: LL2021@unison.co.uk

61. If you have a complaint about the election, you should put it in writing to the returning officer at Electoral Reform Services. Their details are as follows.

Electoral Reform Services
The Election Centre
33 Clarendon Road
London
N8 0NW

Phone: 0208 365 8909

E-mail: unison@cesvotes.com

Labour Link elections 2021-2023 Timetable

Appendix A



7 June 2021	The election procedures and forms are published for branches.
14 June 2021	The start of the nomination period.
14 July 2021 5pm	The end of the nomination period. The deadline for nomination forms, candidate forms and election addresses to be received by the Member Liaison Unit (MLU).
21 July 2021	The deadline for candidates to withdraw their nomination.
28 July 2021	The deadline for candidates to be told about whether they can stand, and for branches to be told about nominations that are not valid.
5 August 2021 5pm	The deadline for candidates and branches that want to appeal to the Returning Officer, where the Returning Officer has decided candidates are not eligible to stand and nominations are not valid.
12 August 2021	The deadline for any appeal decisions made by the Returning Officer.
23 August 2021	Voters are told the details about the election.
7 September 2021	Voting starts. Voting papers are sent to members.
13 September 2021	The start of the voting helpline for members.
7 October 2021 12noon	The end of the voting helpline for members.
13 October 2021 5pm	Voting ends.
20 October 2021 5pm	The deadline for written complaints and supporting evidence to be sent to the Returning Officer.
27 October 2021	The deadline for the Returning Officer to investigate and respond to complaints.
2 November 2021	The results are published.

Successful candidates will take office on announcement of the results.

Their term of office will run until the announcement of the results of the 2023 Labour Link National Committee election.

Labour Link elections 2021-2023
Reserved women's seats

Appendix B



2021 - 2023

Reserved Women's Seats:

Eastern
East Midlands
Greater London
Northern
North West
Scotland
South East
South West

General seats:

Cymru/Wales
West Midlands
Yorkshire and Humberside

Labour Link elections 2021-2021 Candidate form

- If you want to stand in this election, you must complete this form to confirm you are willing to accept nominations in this election.
- All boxes must be completed. Incomplete forms may be invalid.
- Forms may be downloaded from the UNISON website at www.unison.org.uk/elections

Information about you	
Candidate name (as on RMS)	
Candidate RMS number	Candidate branch code
Candidate branch name	
Addresses for election correspondence - do not use branch contact details as UNISON funds, property or resources cannot be used to support campaigning for prospective or confirmed candidates Candidate postal address:	
Email address: (election results will be sent to you at this email address)	
Which seat are you standing for?	
<input type="checkbox"/> East Midlands (Women's seat)	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern (Women's seat)
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern (Women's seat)	<input type="checkbox"/> Scotland (Women's seat)
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater London (Women's seat)	<input type="checkbox"/> South East (Women's seat)
<input type="checkbox"/> North West (Women's seat)	<input type="checkbox"/> South West (Women's seat)
<input type="checkbox"/> Wales/Cymru (General seat)	
<input type="checkbox"/> West Midlands (General seat)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yorkshire & Humberside (General seat)	
Election address	
Is your election address attached? please use the separate Election Address Form	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> To follow	
I confirm that I am willing to stand in this election. I have read the election procedures for this election.	
Print your name	
Signature	Date

This form can be submitted by E-mail: LL2021@unison.co.uk

Deadline for receipt of candidate forms is 5pm on 14 July 2021.

Labour Link elections 2021-2023

Election address form

- This form should be completed by members/prospective candidates submitting an election address to be included in ballot materials.
- Prospective candidates must sign and submit a candidate form (appendix C) to confirm they are willing to accept nominations in this election.
- All boxes must be completed.
- Further copies may be downloaded from the UNISON website at www.unison.org.uk/elections

Information about you	
Candidate name: (as on RMS)	
Candidate RMS number:	Candidate branch code:
Candidate branch name:	
Election address information	
Your election address will be reproduced on the ballot materials with a standard font style and size. Bold, italics and bullet points used on your original statement will be reproduced.	
How do you want your name to appear on the ballot materials	
How many words does your election address contain Your name, your own branch and seat will be printed on the ballot materials and are not part of the maximum 300 words count.	
Date and time sent or version number In case you submit more than one version.	
Your 300 words here:	

This form can be submitted by E-mail: LL2021@unison.co.uk

Deadline for receipt of election addresses is 5pm on 14 July 2021.

ELECTION ADDRESS FORM CHECKLIST

Before you submit this form please check:

- ✓ You have completed, signed and submitted your Candidate Form (appendix C)
- ✓ You have filled in all the boxes and provided all information requested.

Labour Link elections 2021-2023

Nomination form

- Nominating bodies who wish to nominate candidates in the above election must complete this form. All boxes must be completed or the form may be invalid.
- Forms may be downloaded from the UNISON website at www.unison.org.uk/elections
- Prospective candidates must sign and submit a candidate form (appendix C) to confirm they are willing to accept nominations in this election

Nominating body information	
Region:	
Branch name:	
Branch code:	Branch telephone number:
Branch postal address:	
Branch email address:	
Candidate information	
Name of candidate being nominated:	RMS number (if known):
Meeting information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any physical or online meetings held to nominate candidates must take place during the nomination period laid out in the timetable Types of acceptable meetings are branch and committee meetings 	
Meeting date?	Meetings must be held between 14 June and 14 July 2021
Type of meeting (e.g. branch, committee)?	
Online meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> If physical meeting, please specify venue	
Branch certification	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This nomination is made in accordance with the rules of UNISON and the election procedures for this election. The branch officers below are both members of the Labour Link fund, and one officer is the branch Labour Link Officer (if applicable in this branch). The signatures of 2 branch officers are needed. 	
Print Name:	Office held:
Signature:	Date: Membership No.:
Print name:	Office held:
Signature:	Date: Membership No.:
Please provide an explanation if this form has been endorsed by a branch officer other than the branch secretary or chair listed on the RMS.	

This form can be submitted by E-mail: LL2021@unison.co.uk

Deadline for receipt of nomination forms is 5pm on 14 July 2021.

NOMINATION FORM CHECKLIST

Before you submit this form please check:

- ✓ Meeting date is complete
- ✓ Form is signed by two branch officers (who are members of the Labour Link Fund)

Incomplete information may mean the form is invalid.